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A BAR OF SONG



H. E. HARMAN

Poetry American

A BAR OF SONG

BY

HENRY E. HARMAN

AUTHOR OF
IN PEACEFUL VALLEY
AT THE GATE OF DREAMS
IN LOVE'S DOMAIN
GATES OF TWILIGHT
DREAMS OF YESTERDAY

Lc.

THE STATE COMPANY
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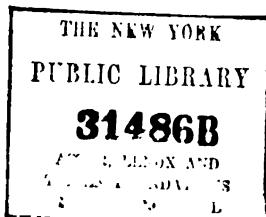
[1914]

M. G. W.

NBI

Harman

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APOLOGIA

From the passionate mouth
Of my mother, The South,
I heard these songs I bring to you;
 But her flute-like tone
 Alas! is gone,
So I've had to sing them over anew:
Yet fortunate notes have come to me
If I sing one song in the mother key.

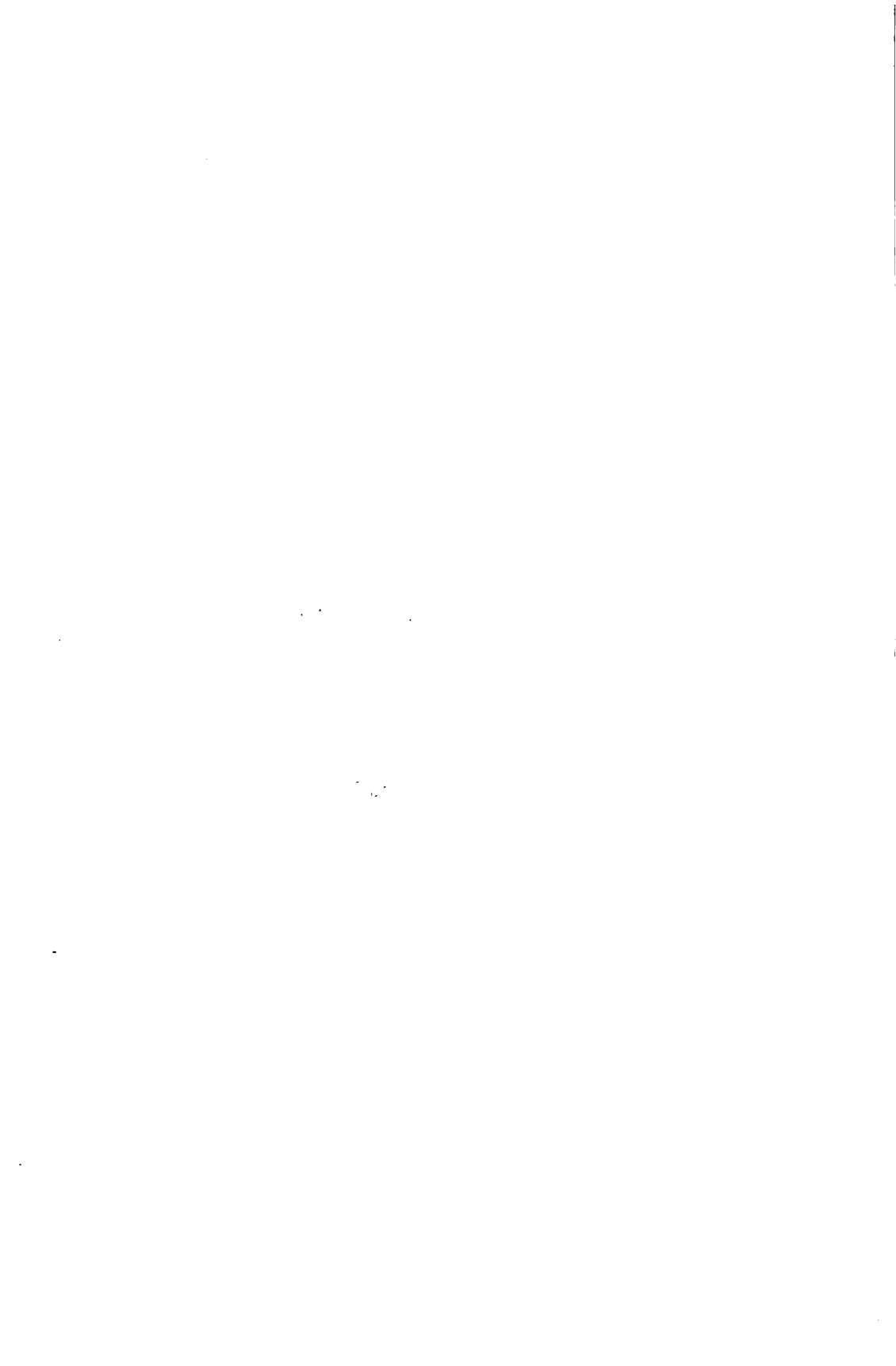


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A BAR OF SONG



*—“Played an olden tune
From Youth’s forgotten June.”*

A BAR OF SONG

Her wistful glances swept the golden west,
Where Day had laid to rest
His sweet faced dreams, entrusting to the Night
These children of the light.

She turned about, within the dim lit room,
Holy with twilight bloom ;
Then in the stillness played an olden tune
From Youth's forgotten June.

Without I listened to the sounds that fell
Like magic-woven spell ;
And some one opened wide the palace gates
Where Love, the Master, waits.

LIFE

I've heard the blue-bird sing :
I've walked life's rosy path of spring—
The golden wealth of summer's sheen
My wistful eyes have seen :—
And now the autumn's tint and glow
Completes the page. Ah ! friend, I know
Life is a blessed thing.



*"Like a ribbon by the sea
Is the road to Enorce."*

J Q V W

THE ROAD TO ENOREE

Oh! the road to Enoree
Like a ribbon by the sea!
Far along the beaches stretching
Like some faithful master's etching;
 Winding, twisting
 Onward listing
To some far-off land of story
Full of hope and human glory;
 Like a ribbon by the sea
 Is the road to Enoree!

Ah! the road to Enoree,
Like some olden dream to me,
Hurries past the forest yonder
Where each mile seems fond and fonder
 And each turning
 Brings me yearning
For the days now long departed
When my darling, golden-hearted,
 Walked the golden sands with me
 On the road to Enoree.

Oh ! the road to Enoree
Where she told her love to me,
When the cherry trees were sifting
Snowy petals—and the drifting
May winds dreaming
Saw the gleaming
Of the words of love unspoken—
Heard the vows, as yet unbroken !
Ah ! the road to Enoree
Like an Eden is to me.

Oh ! the road to Enoree
Like a ribbon by the sea !
Have you heard young love a-calling
Felt new glory round you falling :
Maiden glances
Waking fancies
Of a new land, full of glory ?
Then you know the old sweet story
Of the road to Enoree
Like a ribbon by the sea !

YULETIDE AND YOU

I

A winter's sky and stars without,
Pale moon and memories calling
Encompass all my world about;
God's blessing on me falling.

A scent of lilacs through the room,
Like holy incense burning
Awakens through the twilight gloom
A lover's ardent yearning.

Out there the wind sweeps o'er the plain;
Within, the glowing embers;
Love weaves about his golden chain
The Yuletide yet remembers!

II

Twilight and gloom fill all the room,
Time's prosy things receding,
While Dreams along the hallway bloom
And faces smile in pleading.

As daylight dies from out the skies
And night bestows his blessing
I catch a gleam from Love's sweet eyes
And feel his soft caressing.

III

Somehow an angel's touch is laid
Upon the brow of Sorrow,
And every debt of sin is paid
With dawning of tomorrow.

So hang the mistletoe above
The hallway and the landing
That one may kiss the brow of Love
Beside the hallway standing.

IV

Yuletide and you ! a sky of blue,
Though winter's blasts are blowing,
Old love remembers and is true
As yonder embers glowing.

Yuletide and you ! the sirens sing
As in the Grecian story
And to the Christmas hearth I cling
With you and all its glory ;

For wintry sky and stars without
Pale moon and memories calling
Encompass all my world about,
God's blessing on me falling.

CRIMSON POPPY

Crimson poppy, bending idly in my garden by the
wall,
When I see you maiden footsteps from the orient
softly fall
And low whispers from a latticed casement seem
to call!

Crimson poppy from the desert, all the East in you
is bred;
Warmer suns have given colors to your jealous,
queenly head;
All the passion of the tropics in your lazy smile
is wed.

Exiled blossom, memory-haunted, one whose soul
can never err,
You have taught me tenser passion, like some
Eastern sorcerer
And to worship, Arab-hearted, poppy crimsoned
lips of her.

A SONG

No Siren call across a Scythian sea,
No Circe note upon a rustic flute,
Nor wine of Proserpine can 'ere dispute
With Love's soft voice the range of mystery
That keeps the soul in thraldom absolute
And to the door of glory holds the key.



*"I never knew the joy his presence meant
—about this ingle nook."*

WHEN LOVE DEPARTED

When Love went out and softly closed the door,
Then paused to look with pathos in his eye,
For me the noon-day sun went from the sky
Alas, and I,
Who had been rich—was desolate and poor!

He kissed his hand from down the narrow lane
That wound unto our cottage of content,
Then slowly turned about and outward went,
Onward intent,
Never to cross this little path again.

I never knew the joy his presence meant
About this ingle nook and down the hall,
Where I so often heard his merry call,
Until this pall
Of his farewell brought me my punishment.

A PRAYER

Dear God, when day runs swiftly in its might,
With all its glitter and its gaudy haze,
Its mockish pretense and o'er crowded ways,
My baser self stalks proudly up the height,
And I forget Thy constant, watchful sight,
That, like a sentry, ever with me stays:

But when the night draws close its ebon veil,
To hush the laughter and the noisy shout,
And silence fills the empty street without,
I see Thy stars beyond the tumult sail,
Lo! then I turn repentant, sad and pale
To plead Thy blessing ere the light go out!

WHERE LOVE IS AFLAME

The days fly fast as the years grow older
And tasks, unfinished, are many the while:
The winds each Winter seem cold and colder
And longer the measure of each new mile.

Yet every Spring sees the hawthorn whiter,
The daffodils burn with a deeper gold;
The sun on the hill and meadow is brighter,
As the years creep on and the heart grows old.

Ah! the years may change and the road seem weary,
Our dreams may pass, beyond reclaim,
But there are no days that are sad and dreary
In hearts like those where Love is aflame.

THE DENIAL

The night was cold and Peter's heart beat fast with
new emotion,
His lips were white and thin :
The little court was noisy with to-morrow's strange
commotion
That stirred the hearts of men.

"You know the man", a maiden spoke, "alas you
are forgetting,"
As Peter turned away ;
Then like one riven by some dread, brought on by
old regretting,
He heard the call of day !

Down in his soul the Master's words came like
the knell of sorrow
And smote with sudden dread ;
"Ye will deny me thrice before the dawning of the
morrow."
Then lo ! the East was red !

PRIMROSE

Heart of the Primrose, how I have waited
Eager, expectant, your coming each Spring;
How every tint of your blossoms, so mated,
Rhymed with the garden's most delicate thing.

Mocking-bird, thrush and robin together
Waited your coming, as eager as I;
Singing a welcome, as soft as the weather,
Wooing you back with song and a sigh.

Heart of the Primrose, over and over
I've told you my love as a lover should tell
And yet you look shy at the rose and the clover
And choose all alone in my garden to dwell.

Welcome my messenger, bringing me glory,
Linked with the blossoms that cluster in June,
You come with the warmth and breath of a story,
That lilts with the notes of a lover's old tune.

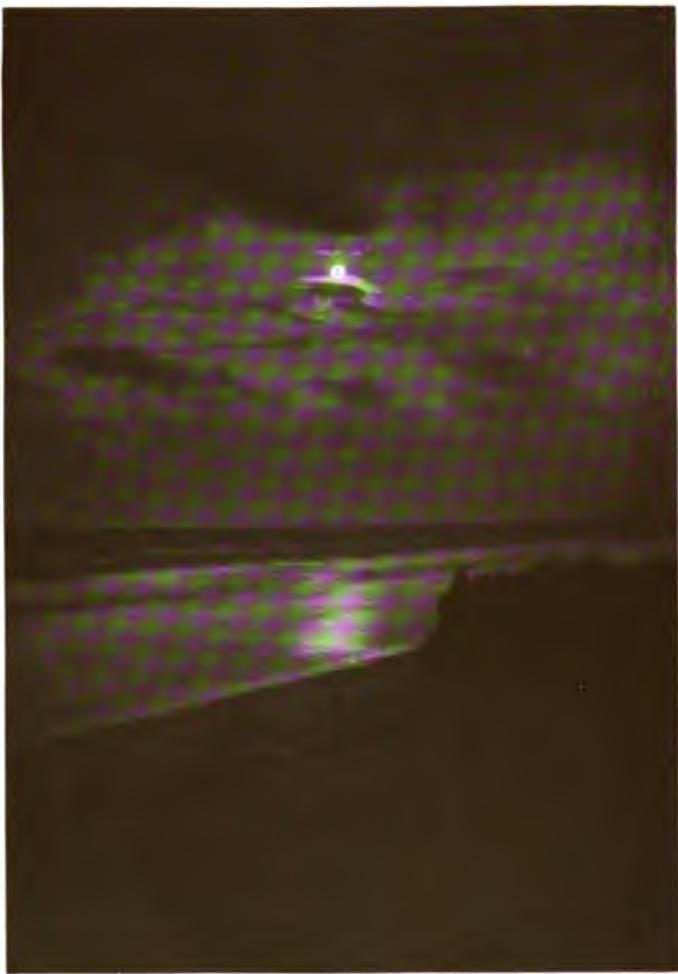
WOMAN

The Master, in an idle, dreaming hour,
Flushed with creation's power;
Pleased with the work His skilful hands had
done,
Pleased with the sea, the land, the burning sun
Which through the ages, at His word must run,
Looked for some task his fancy to beguile,
Just for a little while.

Of ponderous things: the earth, the sun, the sea
Full weary-souled was He.

The storms were taught to guard the trackless
main,
The stars to rise, to shine and set again,
The clouds to fill and weep the April rain:
All things complete, the Master paused to play,
Just for a little day.

Out of the soft, responding clay He made
A toy, with beauty laid;
A woman's form, soft tinted and complete,
In which all lines of glory seemed to meet:
And when, within, a heart began to beat
The Master smiled. His playful task was best;
Fairer than all the rest.



*"I long for the magical sight and the
mist of the sea."*

A SONG OF THE SEA

I

I long for the magical sight and the mist of the sea ;
For the smell of the wind-swept brine
And the deep, where the breakers shine,
With the pleading grief of a lost soul's mystery.

I long for the smooth-woven, silvery sands of the shore,
With woods to the West, and the main
Going far to the East, like a chain,
Whose links run on to the latch of a dreamer's door.

I long for the sheen of the afternoon sun on the sand,
Smooth, white, when the tide is low,
And the West with its gold a-glow ;
When the blessing of rest comes down, 'twixt the sea and the land.

The marsh stretches far to the West with its sad mystery,
Where the sentinel pines rise high
To mark where its endings lie ;
To the East is the mist and the gloom of thy endless leagues, O sea !

II

I long for a sight of the sea, when the daylight
breaks;
When the gulls, like mystery things,
Fly seaward to try their wings;
When the marsh and the wood arouse and the
dream of a new day wakes.

From the far off beach, where shore is broken and
torn,
And the adamant rocks abide,
That embitter the restless tide,
Comes an endless cry, like a soul that is weary and
worn.

III

In sorrow I come to the shore when the long rolling
waves, half spent,
Sweep in, like an echo of grief,
Embracing the beach for relief,
Then break, and weep, and moan, outpouring their
sad lament,

On the welcoming sands, that spread and stretch
in the afternoon sun;
So strong for the lips of the tide,
So eager to hold and to hide
The grief of the sea, when its uttermost toil and
sorrowing has been done.



*“For peace I would come when the low-ebbing
tide is asleep.”*



*“When my soul reaches out for that unexplained
longing for prayer . . . I come to the sea.”*

IV

And why should I come to the sad-sounding sea,
with its wail and its woe?

With its moan on the silvery shore,
Like a hope that is lost evermore?

And why should I ask of this weary tide the things
I already know?

There is fellowship, kindred and kind, a liking of
comrades in pain

With a soul that's sad and the sea—
A mystery ever to me—

Yet a bond 'twixt the seeker of comfort and the
unceasing wail of the main.

V

For peace I would come at the time, when a low
ebbing tide is asleep;

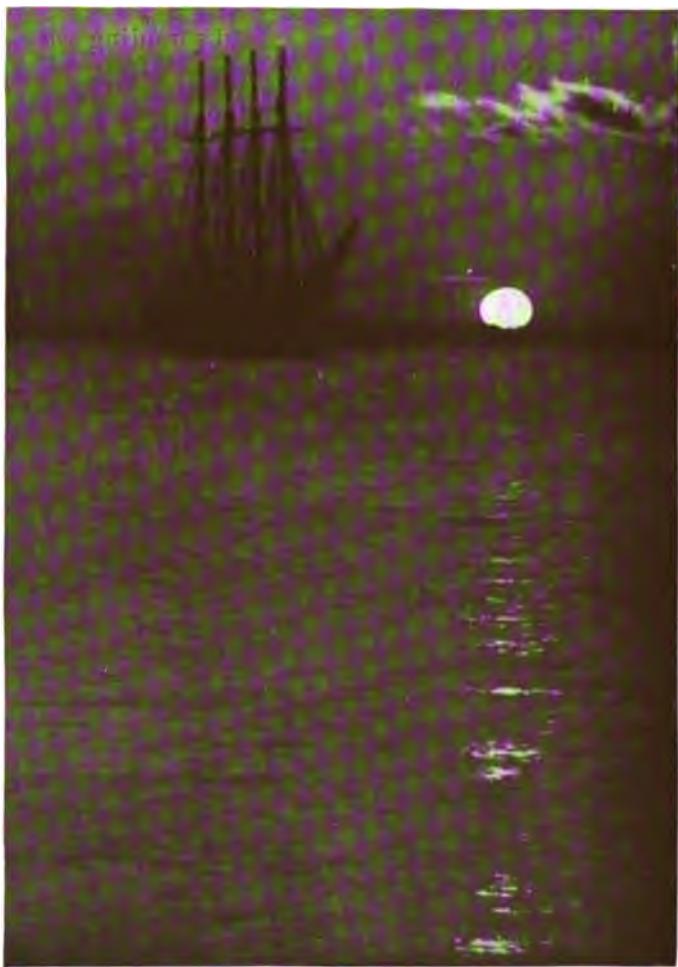
When the master, the sea, is a-dream,
Touched now by the long slanting beam

Of the sun in the West, as he warms every crest of
the fathomless deep.

When courage I seek and for conflict would steady
my soul for the worst,

I come, when the sea leaps high,
In its limitless wrath to the sky,

And threatens the rocks to withstand a soul that's
accurs't.



*“I long for a night by the sea with its silence
and stars.”*

VI

When my soul reaches out for that unexplained
longing for prayer
I come to the sea. And behold
The deeps and distance unfold
A God who is near, and who listens and answers
me there.

For the sea is akin unto God, like the marsh and
the wood;
And softens the soul of him
Who prays; for the endless hymn
That it sings is melody sweet and seals the heart
for good.

Who prays at the feet of the sea, when the ebb
is low,
Prays twice; for a Godlike calm
Turns simple prayer to psalm
And swift the pleas, sea-bless'd, to answering
Heaven go.

VII

I long for a night by the sea, with its silence and
waves,
And its stars in the low-bent blue;
Just these—and a thought of you—
To ease the human unrest of a soul that craves.

INHERITANCE

I

I cannot say from whence it came and some would
tell, perhaps with shame;
But in my blood the warm South flows and fire of
Eastern romance glows,
And burns with steady flame.

II

The East forever calls to me; the olive and the
lotus tree
Spread their soft shade to rest upon
My soul, scorched by the tropic sun;
Yet desert heat is always sweet
Where scarlet flame and love are one!

III

Perhaps, within some age of sin,
My father passed as Beduin;
Perhaps, within my veins there hide,
The warm bloods of a Moslem's bride;
For this I know, the drowsy East
And dreamy South, with fiery ways,
Feed my desires, like kingly feast
And through my blood forever plays.

THE WINTER WIND

I

Spirit of long-lost souls, is yours the voice I hear
Among the leafless trees without my gate;
Is yours the wail, so tremulous with fear,
Or, in its minor note, so full of hate?

II

A world of freedom beckons to your wing;
Yet freedom's breadth can never satisfy
Your fated soul, no matter where you fly:
The starry nights no solace to you bring.

III

About my cottage eaves you wail and weep,
And at my cottage door you loudly call:
All night this cry of sorrowing you keep,
Until your voice is like some ghostly pall
That fills my soul and steals the gift of sleep.

IV

What were the crimes you did, with keen intent,
In distant age that caused relentless fates
To close upon you, ever more the gates
Of peace, and brought this bitter punishment?

V

Without, the night grows colder; and the busy frost
Crystals each faded blade with stars of white:
But lo! until the Dawn's first wave of light
The sad winds sing their dirges of the lost.

LIFE

A little flutter—just time to utter
Some plaintive songs—then day is done.
One star in the West, a moment of rest
And then the set of sun.

Dim shadows playing—a time for praying,
Slow fading of the light;
A few words spoken, the soul's last token
And then, sweetheart, “good-night.”

Life's little flutter—a word to utter,
Then lo! the dream is o'er:
The rain beats fast against the shutter
And Death knocks at the door.

A WISH

If I were king, with a kingly might
I'd strew your path with a royal light;
Were I the force of the mighty sea
I'd make you queen of my destiny;
Had I the gifts of a god to give
Two, endless lives, we two would live;
But as my lot is hedged about
By lowly things, within and out,
This much I crave, of all, the best:
Your love; the world may have the rest.

MOCKERY

I

From out Time's closely guarded hoard
Has come this maxim from afar:
"The pen is stronger than the sword,
"Peace mightier than war."

II

The maxim held disciples few:
Somehow, strife flowed in human veins;
Man found it easier, when he slew,
To blame it on Ambition's gains:
He saw the gold within his hands,
But never saw the stains!

FEAR

The day has its thousand smiles
To caress the heart of man;
Joy trails along like a caravan—
O'er the desert's shining miles;
But the night comes on apace,
With its sombre robe of black
When a frightened world looks back
To the daylight's open face:
And longs for the pale gray light
That shall lift upon the sky
At dawn, when the ghost of night,
Has passed in silence by.

TIME'S DATELESS YEARS

A faded stone beside the sleepy Nile
Marks where a palace stood in ages gone.
There naught is left but desolation. Lone
And still the spot, save every little while
Is heard the groan of Egypt's crocodile
Where Pharaoh's glory once, unrivaled, shone.

A wind-swept Palm, living beyond its day,
Picture of grief, beside the river stands.
It watches there the constant moving sands
That through the torrid wastes forever play—
Mocking the gilded domes of yesterday,
Turning a kingly wealth to desert lands.
Time's dateless years know not of human aim.
Men build and reach for glory and for fame—
While stern oblivion wipes, with careless hands,
From polished stone the victor's gilded name.



SAND DUNES

The sand dunes toil by day, by night,
Under the stars and under the sun;
Their castle dreams of snowy white
Crumble before the task is done:

They move about with a slow desire
Like a human soul on fire.



The wind, which loves the sea so well,
Teases along the clean white sand
And weaves above the dunes a spell
Of pictures wrought by an unseen hand:
Ah! the wind is always busy there
Making the shore line bare.



Here read the wish of a human soul,
Uneasy, restless, never still,
Paying to Fate the utmost toll
Of wants the world can never fill:
Where the sand dunes rise in the sun today
To-morrow the waves will play.

WHO PLANTS A TREE

Who plants a tree beside the road
Where man may rest his tired feet,
Amid the Summer's sullen heat
And ease his shoulder of its load,
Well loved is he! God-blest is he!
Who plants a tree.

He may have passed beyond recall
When weary pilgrim by the way
Its shade may find, at noon of day;
Yet blessings on his soul will fall
And you can see, how blest is he
Who plants a tree.

So long as Spring shall wake the green
Of fluttering leaves upon its limb,
A deeper hue will burn for him.
And passing years that lie between
Will blessings be, for such as he
Who plants a tree.

THE THRUSH

I

Fair beyond words to describe, in their soft, lilting
measure
Of rhythmical song, and filled with some unknown
pleasure

Must be that shore
Which sleeps in peace, low bent by a tropical sea,
Going far to the South, like the path of one who
is free,
Whence now you come once more.

II

Earth has no other land than that which feels
eternal spring

In bloom, that yet could teach your raptured
throat to sing

The songs you've learned:
Just as an exile, wandering far to the East or
West,
Found, after seeing all the world, love's holy birth-
place best
And for it sadly yearned.

III

Your silver note gives to the early dawn of Spring
its tone

Of waking joy. And when the dream of loitering
day is gone,

Your good-night song
Smoothes from the wrinkled soul all scars that
toil has wrought,
And pays the heavy toll where Sin has stoutly
fought

To do my conscience wrong.

IV

With you, dear bird, the whole world sings. And
 where the sloping hill
Touches the vale, ten thousand daisies lift their
 heads and thrill,
 Because of you.
The rose is redder, poppies burn, each breeze that
 passes by
Is perfume-laden, and, above, the May-time sky
 Turns to a deeper blue!

V

Sometimes I think in the mystical tomes of story
A singer was lost and, forever debarred from the
 glory
 That once she knew,
Wandered to earth, with no art but her marvelous
 tune,
And now sings for the comfort of men, in the still-
 ness of June!
 Dear Thrush, is it you?

ROSE OF MY GARDEN

Out in the glow of a summer morn,
Out where the mists of the gray dawn lay,
A rose in my beautiful garden was born
And lived its life through one sweet day:
 The fair dawn passed with no one to see
 This beautiful rose of the morn, save me.

Into my life, when the youth-spell kept
Its mystery dreams of the untried years
The passionate love of a woman swept
And held me fast, as one who hears
 A siren's call, yet no one knew
 The joy she brought to my soul, save you.

MEMORIES

There are wild sweet songs for the soul to sing
In the human heart, as yet unsung,
As the timid bird who trains her young
To higher flights on the untried wing;
But the songs someday will bud and bloom
Like an April meadow thing.

Among the leaves of the Winter pine
Where the wild winds blow in the afternoon
One hears the notes of a far off June;
And through the Jasmine's leafless vine
Notes sway above the still lagoon
No mortal can define.

And when you speak, in your old, sweet way
As the Autumn shadows fill the room,
Somehow the smell of the Summer hay
Floats in, and the April daisies bloom;
And the light of other days come back,
While the lutes of Springtime play.



THE BROOK

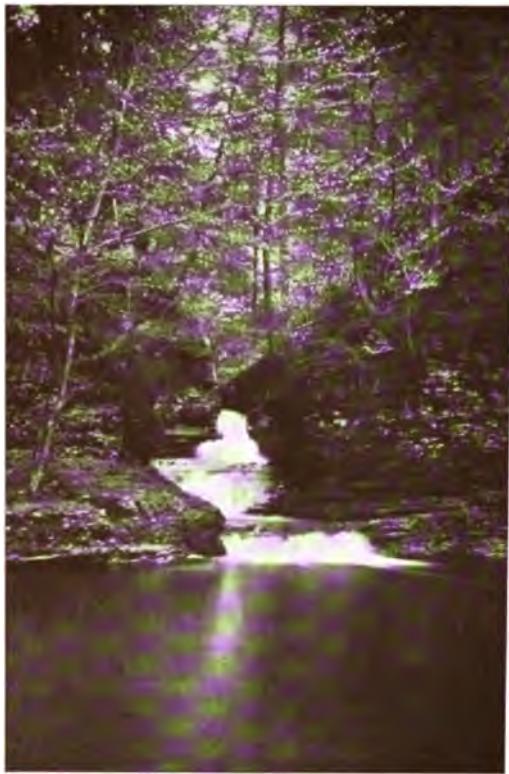
I met the brook in lonesome valley,
Singing its way through the sun-lit meadows,
Every ripple a spray of silver
And each carrying its welcome burden of May
blossoms.
Where it tarried in the eddies forget-me-nots bent
down
To kiss and caress the cooling surface.

The brook hurried down, down, down
Through the green vale of the woods,
Then out across the corn-guarded fields,
Where tall grasses waved above its bosom
And smiled a Summer's welcome
To every passing ripple.



The meadow seemed to calm the eager soul
Of the restless brook, for it slowed a little
Under the alders and the willow trees,
As if to rest and think.
Reaching the wood, it hurried away again,
Heedless of my pleading to linger for a while
In the welcome shade of the maple and birch trees.

“The sea is waiting for me, the great
Open, majestic and mighty sea,” the brook replied.
“I long to be a part of it—to merge myself
Into yon waiting ocean, even to be more
Than a nameless brook in the highlands.



“Here I am nothing, there I'll be great.
I cannot linger in the low-lying meadows,
I cannot loiter in the shade of alder and willow.
I love the rocky ledges that drive me forward,
Onward and outward to the goal of my dreams.

“I am nothing here—there I shall be great.
I will be a part of the vast, unknown sea.
I shall glory in the splendor of storms;
I shall leap skyward in breaking waves;
I shall toss great ships upon my bosom,
And men shall walk along the beach
And wonder at my greatness and power.



Men shall pray to me for peace and mercy
Just as they pray to a god.
No, I cannot wait, the sea is calling me."

And the brook went on and on, to find its way
Into a stagnant lake—alas! from which
Its waters were drawn up by the sunbeams
And sent back to the friendly clouds,
To bless the fields, in dew and rain
And put new lustre in the hillside daisies.

THE PIONEERS

The great Middle-West, with its wonderful accomplishments, has left one task undone. It owes to the early pioneers a monument that will surpass anything of its kind in this country. The subject is so rich in historic and artistic material that such a memorial can be made one of the world wonders. It is time for the West to awake to this task and the following lines are suggested as a stimulus to this undertaking.

I

Loud went the call from the West through the leagues intervening,
And far went its echoing sound to the East, that was leaning,
With listening ear, to the sound. All the multitudes teeming
The cities and lands of the Dutch, the Pilgrim and Swede
Were eager to seek and to find by the trails that lead
Across the line of the Blue Ridge hills
A home secure from the taunting ills
Of cavil and cant and the aimless claims of creed.

II

From the witchcraft land of stern New England's making
Men turned their face to the West, whose hearts were aching
For the broader life on the wild, untrammeled plains.

From the Hudson vale, far South, through the land
 was planted
That liberty-love, which grew and urged and
 panted
For that wider sphere, where the soul could grow
 Unbound by a false creed's chains.

III

So, up from the peopled East, up from the colder
 shores
Gathered the yeomen hearts, with their scanty,
 hard-earned stores;
Valorous, strong and free, the pride of God and
 man,
These turned their faces Westward in many a
 caravan.
And as they went, leaving behind the safety of
 easier living,
Each knew, for a God-like cause, the best of his life
 was giving;
For the wild, wide sweep of the West, with its
 forests of unfelled trees
Called for the strongest hearts and the valor of
 Hercules.

IV

White trails through the roadless woods, they
 moved with the moving sun,
The frontier guard of pioneers, whose task was
 just begun;

White trails o'er the mountain height and into the
valleys dim
They went with the step of melody in Freedom's
unsung hymn.

V

In far Kentucky's valley, along Ohio's stream,
And yon beside the Wabash, where Nature's glories
dream,
The fertile land is sleeping, but dangers are awake
While all the world is waiting to see a new dawn
break :
For out of this unclaimed region, upon this deeper
soil
Must grow a tribe of yeomen, whose bravery and
whose toil
Will yield a race of broader men, broader in all
things best—
As the land of the East is narrow and wider the
virgin West !

Above the untouched forest curled many a cloud
of smoke,
In many a lonesome valley was heard the wood-
man's stroke,
But ah! the tears, and ah! the fears and ah! the
weary wait
And ah! the aims that slowly died, hopeless and
desolate!

VI

We praise our gilded cities, we love our fields of
clover,
We mark the glory of our West, with many a thrill
of pride,
But not until fair History's page is full and flow-
ing over
Shall we recount how many souls for this great
end have died.
Their lowly graves are scattered beside each lonely
hill,
Their manly hopes were shattered before they felt
the thrill
That comes with vict'ry's blessing; and we are left
to tell
The story of their valor and the task they did so
well.

VII

Arouse, ye sons of yeomen, by hero sires begotten!
Arouse, to honor mothers, whose glory, unfor-
gotten,
Spreads like a Summer flood of light o'er all the
West to-day,
Come ye with willing hearts and hands one debt
of love to pay!

Like as their hopes were skyward bent,
Like as their aim to God was lent,
Like as their lives for ye were spent,
Come now and build their monument.



APRIL RAIN

The Master, listening from the skies,
Where warmth and light forever please the eyes,
Heard, far away, sad, uncomplaining sighs
Of children, wearied with the pain
Where Winter crucifies
With Frost and Cold before he dies.

The Master listened once again
Then sent the April rain.

And lo! from meadow-ways of white,
Be-clovered, sweet and clean,
There came the laughter, full and strong,
Of Children in delight
Whose sighs were turned to song,
Because the Master felt their pain
And sent the April rain.

GRECIAN VIGNETTES

I

Cradle of song, of legend, myth and art!
Garden of dreams, where man first saw the light
Of Dawn upon his ancient wall of night,
That long obscured his vision; thou, the mart
Where men first bartered gold for mental sight
And learned to balance tenderness with might;
Thou, first to grow the blossoms of the heart!

II

In that young age, which lies behind the hill
Of fast receding time, there lived a race
Blessed of the gods with heavenly featured grace:
Men great in stature and of sturdy will,
Women, whose pictured charm, ah! yet can thrill,
The poet's soul, so much that he may trace
Through misty years, a Helen's matchless face.

III

Looking beyond the half beclouded seas
Of yesterday, to where Ulysses went,
Like pilgrim, with a soul on conquest bent,
In that far land the dreaming poet sees
Those mystic forms that all his longings please:
While on these shores he listens all intent
And hears the footsteps of an Hercules.

IV

When twilight weaves its mist-entangled veil
Along the scarr'd and rock-indented shore,
An unseen hand reopens wide the door
Of ancient Romance: then, with faces pale
And pleading hands go forth to weep and wail
Thy phantom ghosts, O Greece! forevermore,
Finding new joy along this olden trail.

V

Lives there one Circe in the world today,
Luring with beck and smile the feet of men
To outer halls of wonderment; and then
To inner tortures, where the Furies play;
Know that she looks far down this traveled way,
Bestrewn with all the waifs and wrecks of sin
And counts the price each willing slave must pay.

VI

No roar of Neptune, when his storms lift high
Upon thy rocky shores with fury bent,
And weary sails, in terror, are bespent,
Can hush the voices that forever cry
From out thy golden past and glorify
All men and time. For these are still content
To dwell where gods, alone, can satisfy.

VII

Empowered shores, where every clinging vine
Seeks in its embrace some be-godded tree,
And where was born that child of liberty
Which thy fair bounds were helpless to confine;
The world has long imbibed the purple wine
Of fadeless song, through thy great Odyssey.

And even yet the sting of thy salt brine
Is felt upon the poet's brow, as when
The world was young and dreamy Proserpine
Wove Love and Romance in the hearts of men.

SILENT GODS

I

How many pray to Gods who have no ears!
How many bow, within the cloister gate
To forms, without the pulse of love or hate,
Or souls to feel the burn of grief-arisen tears!

II

Be it the Isis of the lazy Nile,
Be it the Jove of Greece's olive plain,
Or Mammon's face, beloved of modern Cain:
These silent Gods refuse to hear or smile.



THE OLD SOUTH FARM

I

The tumult of the city shuts out the stars o'erhead,
And ne'er a wayside blossom glows
Along the paths men tread :
But way down home, where the whip-poor-will
Enchants the woods of June,
With a lover's plaintive tune,
The night is soft and sweet and still
Under the silver moon.

II

Beneath the lights of the city, I see within its glare
 Sad hearts that throb beneath a smile:
I see men drink the sparkling wine and swear
 Their joy. But after while
Behold! within the dimly-lighted room
 The haggard face and stare:
Where glowed the phantom smile, is gloom:
Where Joy was god, now rules the ghost Despair!

III

But on the old South Farm in Caroline
 There are few lights that shine
Within this night, save yonder stars and moon:
 And where the columbine
 Trails up its dainty vine
Around the poplar's height,
 A dreaming Thrush's tune
Softens the perfumed night
 Of June, of matchless June.

IV

Lo! when the dawn shall break,
 Down there in Caroline,
No saddened hearts will wake:
For on each vale and meadow-way and hill
 The light of peace will shine
And wild, sweet notes the wooded heights will shake
 And every valley thrill.
For dawn brings no regrets for thee and thine.
 Dear Old South Farm,
Way down in Caroline.

MORNING

All through my woe I called to Thee:
Out of the depths I cried
But never a word from yonder shoreless sea
To my lone prayer replied.

Yet when the night, like me was spent,
With grief and old despair,
The gray of dawn brought joy and sweet content:
My answer waited there.

WAR

I

War thunders down the ages
Like some wild storm that rages,
Leaving on history's pages
 The red stains of despair:
List ye, where men are dying
And orphaned ones are crying,
List ye, to woman's sighing
 And find the war-god there!

II

Where one hero's head is lifted
Through the hands of Death are sifted
A thousand trembling hearts, less gifted,
 And stilled forever more:
Where there shines one deed of glory,
There ten thousand hands are gory,
And few are left to tell the story
 And these are sorrow-sore.

A TWILIGHT HYMN

I

A Summer twilight, glory-wrought and still,
Dim shadows on the hill;
The meadow brush, full bloom with scented things
A-whir with weary wings!

Beneath a sky, low-bent with silent stars,
One stands beside the bars
And lifts a song, full-flowing to the brim
In penitential hymn.

II

The distant hills caught up the sweet old song,
In echoes swift along,
'Till notes, like those from some celestial lyre,
Came down and set on fire
The singer's soul. And when the last note died
Across the meadow's side
Night folded all, in sleep, beneath her wing,
Dreaming of those who sing.

BEYOND THE CONGAREE

The roadway wound along the river's side
For miles beyond the town;
Dirge-singing pines stood high in silent pride
And looked in wonder down
On boy and girl, who, clasping hand in hand,
Went schoolward, all alone:
Somehow the pine trees seemed to understand
The light that round them shone.

The laurel trees were blooming at their best,
Along the Congaree,
Where wound the road, and jasmine vines caress'd
Each over-hanging tree.
The river sung its happy course along
Twixt willowed banks of green.
Life to the boy was like some magic song:
No shadow on its sheen.

Across the river stretched the distant hills;
Beyond, were wooded heights.
Ah, who has felt the mystic dream that thrills
A boy's first lofty flights
Where Love plays part, and new ambitions wake
Within his soul the fire
That burns and rouses, for another's sake,
Youth's first, unnamed desire.

No matter what gold heavy laden ships
May sail across the main

And anchor in your port; the trembling lips
 Of Love will sigh again
For youth's first kiss, and flashing wistful eye
 Of maiden modesty:
For you the hills will lift toward the sky
 Beyond your Congaree.

GOD HAS BEEN GOOD

God has been good in what He has not given
 The things from me withheld
 By His all-knowing hand
 Leave me far more content
Than had He all these gifts most lavish sent.

Large wealth, exultant power and fame
 His will denies;
 And yet, in somehow-wise,
 His bounty unto me has freely given
 And sweet content to walk along my path,
With these, dear friend, what joy one mortal hath!

THE SIGHT OF YOU

Come sit with me, love, while the shades grow
longer
Out here in the glow of the afternoon sun;
The touch of your hand makes my heart grow
fonder
Of all that is good when the day is done!

The cry of the street, with its tumult and laughter—
These deaden the soul when the noon runs high;
While the noise of Gain and Mammon, the master,
Shut out from the heart what love would buy.

In the world's swift mart, where Profit is calling,
No heartsease blooms by the hardened road,
But on each head new grief is falling
And each must bear his heavier load.

But here, where the magical twilight lingers
And star-craft sail in the far-off blue,
I feel the clasp of your fairy fingers
And find my peace at the sight of you.



UNFINISHED

O! Master Day, behold yon setting sun
Emblazons all the tinted west with gold,
In whose rich glow thy ending is foretold
While I am helpless, with my tasks undone!

These weary hands have labored soon and late,
But, Master, thou hast sped on fleetest wing;
There was so little time to pray and sing,
So much undone, wilt thou not for me wait?

Here is my flute untouched, but in my heart
The melody awaits, which I must try:
Hold yonder sun, within the gold-set sky
That I may sing this song before we part.



*"The world is full of passion'd things—both
Youth and Love have called to me."*

THE NOVICE

I

How much of penance must I pay to earn my place
in Paradise!
How far from duty's road may stray, yet find my
welcome in the skies:
The world is full of passion'd things; both Youth
and Love have called to me,
Oh! how the mortal round me clings, while I
would seek eternity!

II

I wonder if the stern world knows, that world
which scoffs at things divine,
How guilt and sin, like winter snows, blow on this
helpless soul of mine!
I count the beads, each one by one, then look
across the fields of May
Where, underneath the blessed sun, Life beckons
where the love-lutes play.

III

I am but human, God must know how frail the
novice soul can be,
And when temptations come and go, alas! what is
there left for me
But woman's wish, by passion fired, concealed
within a woman's heart,
That in the bright, sweet world of Love, my soul
could have its part!



THE LAND OF SILENCE

I

A child looked far across the Summer tinted plain
To where the mountains rest against the sky
And lost their outline in a nameless stain
Of blue, beyond the reach of human eye;
And, wondering, asked what fabled lands must lie
Across their tops. But there was no reply:
The childish query passed along in vain.

II

Before you lieth evermore the mystic land
Of life and dreams, of death, of Love and night,
The magic quest of soul's unceasing flight,
Even beyond the pale of human might;
And yet they bring the eager soul no light:
The mystery of these man must not understand.



THE PATH

A lonely stretch of pathway leading by
A meadow brook, and then beyond a hill,
Unto a spot, where pines are tall and still,
Like sentinels beneath the autumn sky;

A pathway meaningless to traveler
Who walks its golden sands without a thrill;
To me this path all roadways glorify,
Because it leads unto the home of her.

SHEBA

I

As in Arabia's gardens blooms of richer colors grow
Because the passion'd kisses of the sun caress them so:
As the tropic nights are darker, and the days are long and brighter
So the maiden lips are redder and their cheeks with blushes glow.

II

Thus to Sheba's matchless beauty all the East and South had paid
Touch of tan and richer color, and about her eyes was laid
All the witchery of smiling, all the art of maid's beguiling,
That entangled kingly fancy and a kingly wisdom swayed.

III

And so, through ages olden, Sheba's fame shall live and last;
All the women of the nations at her feet their worship cast;
She, their wisdom, hers, their glory—thus they keep alive the story
And, with look and smile and beckon hold man's kingly passions fast.

HAGAR'S FAREWELL

Farewell, farewell ! white tents of girlhood days,
Of maidenhood and of that nameless vale
Where Love first bloomed : and in whose skies
yet sail
The dreams of romance, which cannot avail
Aught now for me, save like unto some toy
With which old Memory plays
And in whose handling finds some scanty joy.

Farewell, white tents, you glitter on the plain,
Like argosies upon some tropic sea !
But ah ! the bitterness your sight brings back
to me :
The birth of Love, its bloom, the agony
Of motherhood, but most of all the pain
When Love was scorned, and I
Touched hands with Jealousy,
The memory of which will never die.

See yonder waste, Oh Ishmael, my own !
See yonder sands where never lifts a tree,
Or oasis to shelter you and me :
That is our home. This, with its mystery,
The endless plain, with heat and hunger sown,
Is our abode. Only the stars above,
The orient stars, so full of light and love,
Shall compensate us : these, and liberty.

SUMMER CLOUDS

I

Like castle dreams ye wander in and out
The sky's blue fields, as one, demure, devout,
Aimlessly goes, he knows not how or where,
The chartless road of never-ending doubt.

II

From out that vale where childhood's memories keep
The by-ways green, I often look and weep,
When I discern how many castles fair
Ye set for me, along youth's golden stair,
Which with my host of broken idols sleep.

III

And yet ye go, like gods of liberty,
Laggard or fleet, unfettered, wild and free;
 Ye bring the breezes to the scorching corn,
 Ye cool the brow where life is weary-worn
And bind upon my soul your mystery.

IV

Clouds of the Summer, speak to me and tell,
Are ye the castles where the lost souls dwell?
 In all your moving through the sky about
 Are ye impelled by Time's old monster, Doubt?
Alas! before I have one faint reply
The castle fades into the bluest sky.



*“And yet ye go, like gods of liberty—
—laggard or fleet.”*

LONESOME PINE

Have you no friendships you may call your own?
No comrades, who with you may face the wind
And to the storm-god's restless fury bend,
When all the heath with wreckage has been strown?

Nature has served you with a pauper hand.
Far to the East runs on the leagueless main
Whence come the winds and Autumn's ceaseless
rain.

Your sustenance is from the lifeless sand.

And yet how brave, through all the years you've
been.
You lift a scanty form against the sky
And kiss the mists that float in langor by
And wisdom teach the selfishness of men.

GUILT

Bowed and bare to the lash's cut
The slave bent low to take his punishment;
And when he sought repose within his hut
Even amid his pain, somehow, he found content.
But in a mansion where the conscience sting
Sent through a soul its taunting of unrest
Alas! the bird of guilt would not take wing
But made its home within the victim's breast.



“Nature has served you with a pauper hand.”



AH! BITTER FATE

Ah! bitter fate
To have the dreams,
Yet not the skill of brush or pen
The vision's glories to translate:
This is the heritage of sin!

Ah! bitter wait
To see the glow
Of grandeur pass before the eye!
The colors come too late, too late
Before the dreams take wings and fly.

We hear the notes
Immortals sing,
We hear the music of the spheres,
But ere we grasp, each echo floats
Adown the swift forgotten years.

This is the price
We mortals pay
For that immortal part within :
With flesh we shake the fateful dice
And lo ! the flesh is sure to win !

TO HARRIET SHELLY

Ah ! to have known the thrill of life, with him, the
idol of the gods,
And then to fall and feel the woe, where sorrow
only trods ;
Ah ! to have known his passioned love and shared
the embrace of his arms
And after loving—lose—and walk the roadway of
alarms !

But greater pity thus to leave
The path with him secure, serene,
And find a nameless grave beneath
The treacherous Serpentine !

THE MASTER PAINTER

The June sun sweeps his painter's brush, silently
 up the swarded hill,
And lo! the brown turns quick to green; and where
 the busy, grumbling rill
Through wooded brush and tangled glen finds
 slowly his obstructed way
The painter leaves upon the rocks his lichen spots
 of gray.

Have you not heard the children laugh amid the
 purple dawn of spring,
Because the lilac in the night had blossomed like
 some holy thing:
For while they slept the painter came and with his
 art forever new
He touched the waiting buds and lo! spring's glory
 smiled amid the dew.

I know you've heard the thrush's note come with a
 happier, silver thrill
Before the sun rays yet had touched her nest below
 the hill;
Know ye that while she slept and dreamed of
 summer days ahead
The painter touched the maple buds and turned
 them deeper red.

Not a violet in my garden that will bless the winter
days,
Not a vine along the hedgerow that scents the
wooded ways,
Not a rose that blesses summer, nor a tulip's
crimson blush
But knows the master's colors and is painted by
his brush.

LOVE'S DAWN

As one, who through some haunted night has slept,
Frenzied by dreams, all clothed in hideous shapes,
Slowly awakes and from the spell escapes
Into the light, where dawn's soft peace is kept,
Feels like a soul from jail to freedom swept;
So, when Love came into your life and bent
Your every mood unto his own sweet will
A new world's light fell round you with its thrill
And changed unrest into a heart's content.

And as you walked that new and friendly shore
With Love beside you, smiling as you went,
Far off you heard the stormy breakers roar
Like echoes of the old life's punishment.



AT THE POINT OF THE CAPE

I

Dawn at the point of the cape, where the land runs
evenly down
To the narrowest slip and is lost in the arms of
the main;
A white beach, dimmed by the mantle of night,
with never a spot or a stain,
Stretches away, like a ribbon of light, to the
distant edge of the town.

II

High noon at the cape, with the loitering clouds all
mixed and tangled
With the intricate tints of the sky's own blue;
East and West the stretch of the vision bespangled
With colors and shades of a nameless hue.

Day seems a pause, with a passionate sense of
leaving
This mystery beach, with its clean swept sands of
gold;
The wild trees lean, with arms to the seaward,
grieving
For the tale of wrecks that remain forever untold.

III

Night off the point of the cape—full moon a cloud
and the sea:
Just these and that unsolved mystery
Of darkness and silence, that storms through the
soul in its plight
When alone with itself and the night.

DREAMS OF CHILDHOOD

Somewhere I've read in an olden book
This legend, gray with the moss of age;
That a traveler, weary in step and look,
Went forth on his last long pilgrimage.
At the golden gate, all deftly wrought,
He paused, in awe, at its beauty rare,
For in his hands no gift he brought
That would pass him in through the portals fair,

Save this: that he carried within his soul
The blessed love of a childish face,
The only thing in the scanty toll
Of an empty life that he could trace.
But seeing the gift St. Peter said:
“No richer thing can a mortal bring;
Behold the gates wide open swing
For one, whom a little child has led.”



“The blessed love of a childish face.”

LOVE'S CAPTIVITY

Ah! Since you came and took your place within
The garden of my soul, new flow'rs have grown
In wild luxuriance there; and these have blown
Their perfume all about. Your smile has been,
Dear one, like olden wine, and life to me
Instead, with freedom sown,
Is hedged about with Love's captivity.

Though I be slave I love my serfdom well.
The stronger chains you forge about my will
Are welcome, for they hold me close and still,
Near to the holy place where you must dwell.
Take all my dream of other years than this
And these upon the restless waters strew:
I want but this: my servitude for you.
Behold my lips are passioned for your kiss.

I have known freedom, but how dull now seem
Those years of liberty, before you came.
I even knew the petted touch of fame,
But these dissolve, like some forgotten dream
Before the glory which your love has brought,
And these strong chains your little hands have
wrought.

LOVE'S LITTLE WORLD

I

Where the hearthstone embers smoulder
Love's own voice is softly calling;
On her face the lights are falling
As the years grow old and older.

Love's domain is small, but luring,
One sweet face, content and smiling;
But its force is all beguiling
And its strength is all enduring.

It is she, who reads the story
By the fireside, still and lonely
That can make this ingle only
All my wide, sweet world of glory.

II

Just one little face so tender,
Just these hands, so white and slender,
And one heart that still remembers
Makes my bliss, where glow the embers
Where the hearthstone dreamings smoulder
As the years grow old and older.

Ah! but such a tiny thing
Makes the heart forever sing:
Life is small, I do aver,
Just this room, old love and her.



FRIENDLY SHORES

Passionate sands that learned from your mother,
the Sea,
The spirit unrest, you call both the storm and the
breeze

And the waves, with a penitent plea,
Like a soul that never has learned the blessing of
ease.

The wonder of sea in its endless sweep,
The wonder of storm in its anger pace
And the tireless winds that never sleep,
Are the gods that love and haunt this place.



Clean-swept each morn, as the face of a cloudless
sky

Is this wave-washed beach, with never a stain nor
taint

Upon its sands: clean-swept as the radient eye
That looks from the pardoned soul of a saint!

The endless stretch of the moaning sea,
The rounding curve of the bending sky,
Are myteries all in their breadth to me
As the shoreless space where the sea-gulls fly.



Wonder of water and wonder of sky,
Wonder of dusk, when a storm portends;
Wonderful shores that contented lie
And almost meet where the river ends!

If man could wash his soul of sin as clean
As these white shores of Neptune's vast estate
No barrier then could lift its wall between
His radiant path from earth to heaven's gate.



Ye winds that blow across the mighty deep,
Driving the mist, like snowy-crested fleece,
Here on this beach a tryst of faith you keep,
That men may know your handy-work of peace.

Whose faith has watched life's storm clouds roll
away,
And feels the ease that follows mortal pain
May here behold Love's vesper-closing day,
And see the stars of hope shine out again.



Lull of the sea-winds, easing of waves,
West-moving shadows, the passing of light,
Uplifted spar, like a soul that craves,
Ringing of vesper, the day's "good-night."

THE TYRANNY OF LAW

I sometimes hate the tyranny of law
Because my love of freedom is so wide.
The very thought of locks and chains is awe
To one who has no guilty act to hide.

I watch the birds about my cottage gate
And envy all the freedom they possess;
I see the clouds that swiftly go or wait,
And wonder why man's freedom should be less!

There are no prisons for the daffodils
That bless each day when blooming Spring abides,
There are no chains to lock the rose that thrills
With June's awaking, save the clasp of brides.

Ah! stupid man that he should be beset
By hindrance which the things of Nature scorn;
Why should his sturdy race, alas! beget
An offspring, of its widest freedom shorn?

And thus I hate the tyranny of laws,
The sight of prison wall, the clank of chain,
All things that rob of liberty, because
These bring to man his heritage of pain.

WISDOM AND LOVE

Old Wisdom said to Love:

“Now come along with me today,
Come, let us glean from history’s storied page
The greater deeds of warrior and sage;
Glean from these musty tomes the wealth of
man
By barter, trade and caravan
And when we’ve garnered all the knowledge
that we can
If there be time, perhaps, a little play.”

But Love, the wise

Looking from wistful eyes,
Said thus: “Oh! Wisdom, I would roam about
To-day among the meadow-lands of Doubt
Where bend blue Summer skies:
For on a day like this
One’s looking for a kiss
And I, perchance, may see
Some maid of mystery,
Some maiden with a sigh,
Lonesome of heart as I;
So, Wisdom, let me play
Just for this little day:
Perhaps, in school to-morrow,
We two may study sorrow.”



TWILIGHT ON THE MARSH

It is twilight on the marsh, the dim ending
Of a long sweet day, now weary of golden sunshine,
And yellow spun dreams, all full of romance and
love.

From the early waking of the gray dawn,
Out there, over the calm waters of the gulf,
When the first hungry gull flew seaward,
Until this wistful twilight hour,
Each moment has been filled with the glory of
perfection :
A day with the thoughts of old, sweet memories in
its eyes.

Long before the gray line of morning crossed the
East

I walked on the beaches yonder and listened,
Listened to the soft spoken words of the talking
waves.

Mingled with their echo was the scream of the
fish-hawk,

Then the wild call of a gray eagle to his mate;
And later the silver note of the hermit thrush,
Securely hid among the myriad leaves of the live
oak.

What a blessed experience is a summer dawn by
the sea!

Every moment is an idyl, every tree a poem,
Every sound a symphony and
Every mist like the drapery that covers a bride.

I have listened to the sea in its wrath
And in its voice was the anger of a god.

I have listened to the sea in its moaning
And every tone was full of human grief.

I have listened to the waves in a still June dawn
And their voice was like the whisper of lovers.

The sea has its magical tinge of life, thought,
feeling,

Full of love, hate and anger, like a living thing.

But mystery above all else is the voice of the deep,
Its anger expressed in storm,
Its grief portrayed at ebb tide,
And its peace, pictured in this golden twilight,
Which extends from the marsh to the main,
And in dim outline, mingles the two in one.

The glory of a perfect day now fades upon the
marsh,
That like a king, weary of his pomp and power,
Longs to share a cottage and wear no crown but
flowers.

The little stars, with their mystery, like that of
the sea,
Awaken and become sensuous, like living things.
Each prints its image upon the water,
And out here, among the marsh grass, is an
inverted sky,
More beautiful with its silver and blue and green
Than any picture yet painted by a master.

In every clump of grass is the love call of a bird
to its mate.
Wings are swift in the home coming flight,
Fear quickens each belated pilgrim;
The thrush alone, is bold in the enveloping
darkness,
Daring to lift one more burst of song
Before the day closes.

And as his last note finds an echo
In the heart of yonder live oak,
Deep silence settles upon the marsh,
Broken only by the complaining murmur
Of the sea which never sleeps.

And further, as the darkness envelopes all this world
Of marsh and sea and shore
I am left alone. The marsh birds are asleep.
Not a leaf of the live oak, nor a frond of the palm tree moves.
Even the west winds, that swept the meadows in the afternoon,
Are aweary now. They also sleep.
The sea alone is my companion and as I kneel to pray,
There is comradeship in his presence,
There is sympathy in his grief
And our voices mingle in a word of devotion,
Not of prayer, but of praise
For this serene picture of twilight on the marsh.

TO ONE SIXTEEN

I

From the warm, white beach, where the Gulf of
Aden lies
Like a ruby waste, blue as a moslem's eyes;
From the Red Sea sands that wash a tentless shore,
To the far, far East, where the desert closed the
door
To human trail; and where the caravan
Paused in despair at the last white hut of man,
A fairy brought all colors, new and old,
To work and weave into your hair of gold.

II

From Egypt's gardens where the finest silk is spun
And poppies catch all colors of the sun.
Where desert waste distills in nightly dew,
Her Crystals charged with every tropic hue,
This fairy caught from underneath the skies
The nameless charm and sparkle of your eyes.

III

Out of the South where blooms the scented Thyme,
Where every sand is like a poet's rhyme;
From coasts where palms lean seaward in repose
And every day dreams idly to its close
Your goddess brought, within her dainty ships,
The tempting langor of your girlish lips.

ONE WHO LOVES LIFE

Shall I tell you of one who is in love with life,
Whose whole soul is all aflame
With the joy of living and its beautiful things?

Then listen! He may not be the petted son of fortune.

She who lavishes gold into mortal hands
May have silently passed him by.
No trace of royal blood may flow in his veins,
He may belong to that populous family of earth
Whose birth was unheralded by some mysterious star.

But fortune and royalty and blood play small parts
In souls where the love of life and its beautiful things
Is inherent and holds sway.

This lover of life is master over theory and circumstance.

Conditions to him, no matter how deplorable,
Never obscure the glory of heaven's sunshine,
The light of stars, nor the perfume of violets.
To him, the light of each day is the smile of divinity,
The darkness of each night is the caress of peace.
To him, the blast of every winter storm
Foretells the wealth of a day in June,
And the wilting of flowers at the touch of frost
Means April's resurrection of life.

Each dawn finds him glad at the birth of a new day,
Eager for its untried tasks, even as youth,

At life's threshold, longs to probe the mystery of
living.

Each dawn to him is like a new youth,
Full of promise, full of hopes
All beckoning, like sirens, to one eager for
adventure.

Twilight comes to him with its shadowy regret,
Not unhappily, but with regret that one more day
is gone.

He has garnered from it his fill of joy
And yet his love of life is such
That he is jealous of every day that passes
And this leaves him one day less to live.

But as the night shadow falls about him
It awakens in his soul that other emotion of joy,
The laying aside of toil and conquest
And a turning to the altar of prayer.
Every star in the blue above is full of mystery,
The very silence and darkness suggest devotion.
The day's tasks induce surrender to sleep,
Itself more mysterious than life.

And ere his devotions are finished
He sleeps, forgetful of the joy of living
While through his dreams a thread of golden
romance
Wanders, until the light of dawn shall lay its hand
Upon his eyelids and call him softly
Into the gladness of another day.

TO-MORROW'S TASK

Unsated wish means life.
He who wants, has a work to do,
The towering heights to climb
And undiscovered lands yet to explore.
Beyond lies the vale of realization,
With its lotus perfume and lethean streams.
But the dreams of the victor are not so sweet
As the urging aspirations of him who climbs.

It is the old, old legend of Alexander again,
Reaching the uttermost bounds of conquest,
And weeping, alone, for other tasks to do.
The unpeopled wastes, that lay beyond,
Offered no resistance to the pagan soldier;
The glory of past victories paled sadly,
Compared with the passion that urged unwon
battles.
“No worlds to conquer” was an Ultima Thule
That meant despair to the warrior’s heart.

To the living soul there is no such thing as content.
Every night brings dreams that must come true,
The freshness of every dawn will awaken new
ambitions,
And every twilight will find tasks unfinished
Which to-morrow must complete!

To the ardent soul a Heaven of absolute rest
Is beyond the idea of endurance.
An eternal Sabbath is beyond our comprehension.
The millions of hope-wrought spirits the world
 has known,
Would mutiny in a life of eternal ease
And would plead for tasks,
Such as the sweet old human world gave them.

The unattained heights make life worth while.
The God-given spirit to do is ever alive in the soul.
Attainment only acts as a stimulus to do more.
Every height reached gives zest for new effort.
Always beyond lies a fairer country
Toward whose shores the soul is ever turned.
Herein is born man's greatest gift—
The spirit of Hope, without whose aid
All human effort would be impossible,
Life unendurable
And unawaking sleep the burden of our prayers.

In this restlessness, this ever pressing forward
To woo, to win, to conquer,
Man finds his closest kinship to divinity.
In this spirit is our claim to immortality.
This is part of the great Master's soul in us.
Creating new worlds through eternal ages himself,

God has given man this spirit of creation,
Of conquest and of untold longings,
Which even accomplishment itself never satisfies.

Happy is he who possesses this gift in abundance.
His kinship to the divine is doubly close,
Though the burden he must bear is heavy.
To him there is no haven where sails are furled,
No journey's end where the tent is pitched.
His is the eternal, ceaseless wish to do.
And even when his tired body
Shall become brother to the dust,
His soul shall start anew on its journey of conquest,
The end of which
The eternal years alone shall mark.

A HUMAN CREED

I am Adam.

My home is the Garden of Eden,
Just where my illustrious ancestor was placed
When the world was in its Springtime.
The pure blood of my father flows in these veins,
Untainted and unchanged.
The world and time may have changed, not I.

My habitation is full of beautiful things.

I live in a world of bliss,
And yet every sweet must have its bitter,
Every sun ray its shadow,
And every sin its keen regret.

I am to-day as the Creator made me.

All the conflicting impulses remain the same.
A longing for that forbidden fruit,
Which grows in this beautiful garden,
Is as strong in me as it was in my distant ancestor.
To eat it is, perhaps, to sin.
At any rate, disobedience brings regret,
And yet, and yet!
Who has not sinned has never lived.
Who has not felt the pain of contrition
Has never known the glory of forgiveness.
Who has not human passions
Knows not the pleasure of their gratification.

Yes, I am Adam—

Full of the strange longings the Master gave me;
Full of hope, desire and a reaching out for things
Forbidden by what man calls law.

These impulses fight for mastery—

The fruit hangs luscious on the golden trees,

Siren voices call from hidden places,

Bewildering phantoms cross my pathway.

Fame, Wealth, Passion, Desire and Love call softly,
And I, full of my father's weakness,
Unarmed, as he, against the power of human desire,
Listen to the whispers that woo and win.

I fall, as he fell, and am driven;

Driven with a fiery sword, from my Eden home,

Out into a wilderness where hissing sounds

Smite my ear, where beady eyes stare at me,

Where Fear and Awe, without my consent,

Lay their clammy hands upon me.

Darkness hangs about my road.

Batty wings flit about my head.

Dread falls upon my soul.

I am undone.

I reap the heritage of my father.

I am punished for another's sin;

My sin, tis true, and yet *not* mine.

I am a creature of circumstances and environment.

The impulses given me have led me astray.
Over these gifts I had no will or choice.
They are mine by heritage,
And yet they have led me into the wild,
Where creeping things soil me with their slime.

Shall I rebel against my fate?
Shall I sulk in the wilderness
And make friends of bats and reptiles,
Choosing the by-ways of grief
Rather than the sunshine on the hill-top?

Never. I am Adam.
My ancestor's blood runs pure in my veins.
Like him, I am master of my fate;
I arise in the wilderness with resolute soul
And turn my face to the garden.
Repentance smites me sore.
On the wayside I pray alone.
I plead, not my weakness, but my misfortune.
I know my limitations.
I know my strength and my environment.
Contrition fills my soul. And then
A great light comes in,
And when I awake the gates of Eden
Are open wide to receive me back again.

Yes, I am Adam—
As brave as he and as strong,
And likewise as weak.
I shall condone none of my weaknesses.
They are all God-given
And belong to me as a royal heritage.
I shall not complain,
I shall not shrink and beg
When the lash is laid upon my bare shoulders.
My soul is unafraid and unbowed.
I look upwards where stars of hope shine.
I leave in my soul no unrepented sin.
I am Adam, God's own creation,
And I bless the Master
For the soul of courage He has given me.

EARTH'S SADDEST NIGHT

The stars over Palestine were dim that night.
Not because of any obscuring clouds,
Or silvery mist, or plant-refreshing rain.
It was the dry season and the atmosphere
Was crystal-clear, without fleck or flaw.

The stars were dim because of their own tears—
Tears unbidden, which could not be restrained.
The dew was heavy on the olive leaves
And on the sparse grass were crystal beads of
water.

For the night wept, as well as the far away stars
And the very darkness seemed to groan in agony.

Down in a garden one lone figure bowed.
The world has ever since loved the olive trees
Because they shadowed His grief, in part only,
From the far-dimmed stars and the night.
No grief had ever touched a soul that was so keen,
So all-powering, as that which reached the Master
On that saddest night the world has ever known.
Desertion by friends would be bearable—
The shadow of to-morrow's cross could be endured;
The cut of the nails and the thrust of spears
Could all be borne—but beyond these,
Alas! the Master felt a keener grief!

Through long ages the world had sinned.
Backward lay the savage cruelties
Of unrecorded savage wars.
The cry of innocent and unprotected children,
Of lone murders in the silent night,
Of sin-stained women in despair,
Of a world's savagery and open guilt,
All came to the Master in a single wail—
Pleading for mercy and absolution.

It was the total of a world's grief and its pain,
The total of its crimes and atrocities,
The acme of its secret murders
And its flagrant, open abortions,
Stretching backward through the ages.
The suffering of forty centuries was laid upon
one soul.

That was the secret of the Master's plea:
"If this cup may pass, O, Father."
No wonder the stars were dim with tears,
No wonder the tropic night wept heavily,
No wonder the darkness groaned out its grief,
As the Master's prayer was heard around a world.

Earth's saddest night will always live
In romance, story and song
As the tenderest, sweetest memory
The world has ever known.



SEA MYSTERIES

Vast, unknown, un-understood,
Eloquent, soul stirring sea!
An epic, greater than all subjects combined,
For the brain of man to reckon with.
You know and reach every part of God's wide
world.
Where gorgeous flowers bloom in the tropics
And plenteous fruit ripen, to make men indolent,
And the sun and stars shine with unfailing
brilliance,
You are there, with your mysterious stillness,
At times, and your turbulent storms at others.

Where the shores offer you their Spring and
Summer flowers
And the even recurrence of seasons;
Lifting man to his greatest achievements,
You are there—
There to bring his ships to port
To bear his treasures and his pleasure craft upon
your bosom,
To aid in his enterprise and his achievements—
To help make him great—
Because you know his greatness can never surpass
your own.

Where the cold of the North and the far South
Holds the world in its arms, beyond the approach
of man—

Behold you are there;
Not because you envy one foot of the land or the
icy coast—

Not because man may supplant you in your power,
But you are there, like a God—omnipresent,
Watching the very ends of the world
For Him who created us both.

II

And thus you go, even beyond the travels of man.
You watch the polar seas as well as the desert coast.
You are friend, at once, of Arab and Esquimo.

The jungles of the Amazon's delta
Are as familiar to you as the coasts of Greenland.
No beach of romantic beauty
Is beyond your knowing and your loving embrace;
No beach so cold or desert laden
That you do not patrol its desolate wilds
And encourage its ice or sands with your kiss.
And above all of this watchfulness,
This world-wide greatness of power,
This sympathy and tenderness, the tempest and
calm
You keep, untold, the secret of your crimes!
Each sunken ship lies far below your placid
surface.
No gravestones rise above the trough of your
waves.
When you envy man his greatness
And wish to destroy his craft
You call the storms, that ever await your bidding;
And these, with fog and cloud, make easy the task.
Then unknown graves are opened
And shrouds, which tell no tales,
Are laid in your depths, where the sunshine never
enters.

PRAAYER

I

The Moslem on the burning sands of the desert,
Retreating from some nameless crime,
Or, in extremis from heat and thirst,
Knelt beside a lone palm tree
To bare his soul in prayer.

He uttered but few words, yet every line on his face
Betokened contrition and the storm of feeling
That had driven his sin-tossed soul
Into the haven of supplication.

He condones none of his guilt:
He hides nothing, but tells his unseen god
That he is more sin-spotted than any Moslem
Who curses the desert with his presence.

He bares his soul to the merciless sun,
He strikes his uncovered breast
And with head thrown back,
With arms wide open, he faces the East
To receive that unfailing pardon
Of which he is unworthy.
The Moslem prays!

II

In the gray dawn of a tawdry room,
Disheveled by the marks of debauch and revelry,
A woman awakens from troubled sleep.
The hand of dissipation has touched her face

And laid the marks of keen regret
Where the lines of beauty should be.

She thinks long and tensely in the dim light.
Recollections of girlhood and girlhood joys
Come back to blight her awakening.
Her breast heaves with emotion
And unbidden tears well into the beautiful eyes.
Slowly she rises and down beside the couch of
disgrace
She bows the head of black tresses
In a Magdalene's prayer of repentance.

Like the Moslem, there is no condoning her sin.
All of her guilt lies weighty upon her young soul.
She feels unworthy, even to pray,
And yet, in the dim light of her gaudy room,
With its simple trinkets of her fallen life,
There come the gentle words of the Master:
"I condemn thee not, go, sin no more."

The Magdalene prayed.

III

Within the splendor of God's temple,
With its Bible, its altar and its sacramental feast,
A man knelt on velvet cushions
And read the cold lines of prayer
Printed in a cold book:
Reading in unison with a liveried minister
Who stood by a golden altar.

Rich hangings were about the windows
And the smell of incense was in the air.
But alas! the cold words from the cold book,
Uttered by self-loving Pharisee lips,
Went no further than the door of the temple.
The spirit of no tense feeling, or repentance was
 there
To carry them further; for self-love and content
Filled the man's soul.
The prayer was a mockery
And brought no answer.

The Pharisee prayed in vain.

A LOVE SONG

Ah! when your love came swift into my heart
And mutely left its golden image there,
Even the trodden street became as fair
As blooming vales. Each roadway was a part
Of nameless avenues leading afield, afar,
To some fair palace underneath a star.
Then all my yesterdays, bereft and bare,
Gave place to bright to-morrows; and the art
Of loving you made me an heir
To all the glories that have been and are.

TO HENRY RICHARD WILDE

Immortal thou! By one immortal note
Struck by thy genius on some magic lyre—
One song that set a listening world on fire—
Men pause to bless the trembling hand that wrote
The “Summer Rose”. Thy tracks on Tampa’s sand
No tide has reached, for all men understand
And sing thy song—full flowing with desire.
Its phantom threads are held in every hand
And every silken mesh leads far remote
Unto the portals of Love’s mystic land.

HENRY TIMROD

Perhaps the best poem left by the lamented Henry Timrod
is “Spring”, a poem so full of tenderness and delicacy of
thought, as to make his name immortal, even had he written
nothing else.

No faithful watch beside thy lowly grave
By those for whom thy sweetest songs were sung:
Nor polished marble, with its silent tongue,
Though eloquent, can ever dare to save
Half of the glory that in pity hung
About thy path; nor can these tell how brave
Was thy young soul, consumed by heavenly crave.
So sleep, bereft, though greater than a king,
Thou singer! in whose song Love’s holiest thing
Was woven fast and o’er whose grave is flung
Echoes, in tune, to thy immortal “Spring.”

FOR YOU

Each Spring comes back with its brighter skies
That shelter the vale with a deeper blue,
But they bring not back your tender eyes,
Nor the love of you.

Noon walks the vale like a mystical king
Where the wild, sweet blossoms plead and woo,
But alas! I miss this one sweet thing—
Just the sight of you.

The white shore, sanded and wave-wrapped, lies
Where once there echoed the steps of two:
To-day but the phantoms of hope arise
As I pray for you.

The night bird calls to its nestling own
From yonder fragrant pine and yew,
While I stretch my arms in grief, alone,
For the arms of you.

APRIL CLOUDS.

Ye idle gypsies of the April sky
That wander in, your pathless world, and out,
Aimless as they bereft of care and doubt;
Have ye no wish to wait and linger nigh
The myrtle hedge that blooms, serene, about
The meadow ways? Dear April clouds, I see
Your ardent love of gypsy liberty
Impells each mile you go, knowing not why,
Nor where, your twilight camp shall be.

ROSABELLE

I

Where lies that vast, unmeasured height
Whence you have gone, dear Rosabelle,
Through which you took your last, long flight?
You know the pathway well:—
Was it beset with clouds of night,
Or flooded with a golden light
Which from Elysium fell?

II

Was it alone you traveled there
Through that uncharted realm of space?
Or did some angel's presence care
For all your needs, in that long race
From earth and love and heart-things fair
And brush away the silent tear,
That must have stained your holy face!

Did you not pause to look away
From those dim heights to earth again—
To where the mortal shadows lay
All mixed with joy and love and pain,
And turn your heavenward course astray
To taste love's sting, for one short day,
And bear the crimson of its stain?

III

The streets are new to your bright eyes
And all bewildering the ways of gold—
So far unlike the earthly paths of old
That in the silence I can hear replies
Unto my prayer:—Somehow I hear your sighs!

The vast, wide sweep that circles far
Your horizon is all too wide
To house that love which used to hide
In closer bounds, beneath a mortal star,
That flamed my soul and made you what you are.

The old, sweet thoughts of time's corrupted earth
Must come to you like phantoms pale—
Must come and plead, yet no avail
Have they to move you from your newer birth,
Nor waken in my soul one note of mirth.

IV

Rest by the golden gate, dear Rosabelle,
There rest and wait:—
Soon I shall scent the yellow asphodel
That waves its plumes about your new estate;
And when our hands shall meet across the golden
bar
Eternity, alas! will be too fleet
In which my soul may tell
Its love for you—Its love for what you are!

THE SPIRIT OF REVENGE

By every star that holds its steady place
Within the sky, by every ray of light
That beams from out the Sun's unhidden face,
Or from the moon, upon the saddest night,
I vow revenge as deep as yonder Sea
On those who dare to hinder me.

By all the Gods to whom the soul has prayed,
By all the cloisters, with their sacred flame,
By every altar where the priest has laid
A sacrifice, to wash away his shame,
I vow, untrammeled, as the wind that blows
The price of blood upon my foes.

APRIL DAWN

Dim streaks of gray across the pale blue rim
Of Eastern sky, when all is hushed and still!
Bright streaks of red the wide, gray spaces fill,
Richer than colors of a diadem:
Then comes the thrush's silver-fluted song
That thrills the silence as it floats along
When day is waking in an April hymn.

TWILIGHT LURE

Dim mist of shadows, lurid with the light
Of setting sun, kissed back from yonder hill:
One pleading note of lonely Whip-poor-will
To welcome back her own beloved night.
Shadow and sheen old love-ties newly plight,
As hand of silence smooths the tumult still.
The window lights my weary footsteps thrill
And hearthstone lure awakens new delight.

A thousand years and never yet has failed
The evening's dowered gift of ease and rest;
No shade of night, but every star has sailed
Its sea of blue to islands in the West;
And ne'er a twilight, but somehow I hear
Love's call from warm, uplifted lips of her.

THE LOVE OF GOLD

Ah! men, enmeshed in the net of gold!
Ah! men, be-crazed by the love of trade!
Even while the years about you fade
Your fingers clasp and fondly hold
The things of which Love is afraid.

THE DESERT'S HARVEST

Sharp and fierce are the rays of the sun;
And eager the desert swallows up
The showering heat in a molten cup—
While sands, like the waves of an ocean, run.

Even the breeze, in a wild desire
Is parched with the breath of fire.

Is it a phantom the traveler sees
There on the slope, with its brown and green
And a silent brook that slips between
The mossy bank and the shading trees?
Yes, one mile on, and the race is won,
From the burning heat and the merciless sun.

Ah! that is the turn which the desert plays,
The will-o-the-wisp that hangs before
The traveler's eyes for one mile more—
A step, a gasp, then Death's hand stays;
And where the sand dunes run and play
A Soul's dead hopes are hidden away.

BROKEN IDOLS

I

Since three decades, three long decades, out where
the coarse world swings
In its swirl of war, of love and trade, where the
flute of Mammon sings,
I walk once more by a garden wall that encircles
the holiest things.
The arch of heaven, just as of old, bends earth-
ward over all,
The clustered sun-rays come as full and on the
blossoms fall :—
From out the mass of weeds the ghosts of other
springtimes call.

II

Across the field, two leagues away, the same sad
river runs,
Slipping between the silent hills that count the
setting suns—
Beyond, a stretch of withered pines stands out
like skeletons.
Here in the garden tangled vines in wild
confusion grow :
Down yonder path the dainty feet of other
summers go—
And here I count my losses, all, no man shall
ever know.

The sea lies there, beyond that stretch of coral-colored sand;
Whose shore line running far is like some magic, mystic land—
Whose moan is filled with sorrow, which my soul can understand.
Is it her voice that mingles soft, with every lapping wave
That breaks upon the beaches, there, a part of her young grave!
Or is it only wishing so for one I love and crave?

IV

She was fairer than the meadows, fairer than the April skies,
All my world of youthful glory shone within her witching eyes:—
Where she went I gladly followed, where she dwelt was paradise.
But the jealous sea, enamored, longed to have her for his bride
Where the nameless, sea-winged mystics in the coral valleys hide,
While my soul, like Juda's master, on its cross was crucified.

v

The day is still afresh in mind, when I knew the
good ship sailed:
The flood of years, nor dust of time its memory
has assailed:
The wonder of her love and mine, remain as then,
unveiled:
But when the wreckage, whipped and torn along
the shore was spread
And the sole escaping sailor brought message
of the dead
The weight of Age and Doubt and Death was
laid upon my head.

VI

Like exiled waters of the sea, held captive in some
green lagoon,
That, restless, wait in idleness beneath the sultry
afternoon,
Hear yonder waves dash on the rocks and long to
mingle in their swoon
Of wild, free life, on alien coasts; thus restless
captive, I
Bewail the bonds that hold me fast, that will
not let my fly
And find my silent dead, somehow, somewhere,
in some new sky.

VII

Since then I hate the treachery of every wave that
scars the main :
I hate its storms, I hate its calms, I hate its stern
disdain
Of human sorrow ; and I hate the shore that bears
its stain ;
For not one spot around the world by every
clime and shore
On which the breakers fall and seethe and wash
and wail and roar,
But reveals some broken idol, lost to worship
ever-more.

VIII

Until this grief came in my soul, with all its
poisoned stings
And shadowed as some fabled bird, with black
ill-omened wings,
I had my god, my church, my creed, my love for
holy things :
But now, bereft, my soul is wrapped in question-
ing and doubt,
I cannot fix abiding faith on aught within, or
out ;
My anchor lost, I drift, alas ! like derelict about.

IX

Is there a god who takes away the thing for which
we yearn?
Who daily listens unto prayer, but who will not
return
Out of his wealth the simple gifts for which the
soul may burn?
All idols which the East has known through
ages far away
Have listened, all unheeding, as pagans kneel
to pray,
And answer not. Can I believe my God as cold
as they?

X

Sometimes I think I have no God. My slender
faith hangs by a thread.
I look upon yon smiling sea and know that she
is dead,
And then I feel the frost of time grown whiter
on my head.
So out of all my weariness I cast about to find
Some stay on which to rest my faith, stronger
than man or mind:
'Tis then to love the old faith more my spirit
is inclined.

XI

“Can all be chance? Are prayers in vain? Alas!
are chanted creeds

All writ to ease the soul of him, undone by cruel
deeds,

Are churches, altars only meant to fill the sinner’s
needs?”

I asked my soul thus, burdened with a grief it
could not bear:

Somehow, unanswering silence to the pleading
waited there,

Somehow, I lost old human faith in life’s old
stronghold—prayer.

XII

All through ten thousand years and more no sun
has yet forgot to rise—

All through ten thousand years and more no calm
of nightly skies

Has yet forgot a single star—and so the destinies
Of sun and star, the April rain and winter’s
frosted snows

Must have some godly hand that holds the
guiding reins and knows

The paths of all things great or small—the path
which each one goes.

XIII

There are some treasured playthings left about this
mansion old and gray;
Along the garden wall still grow the sweet, old
blossoms of her day:
Secure I keep her pictured face, which fate nor
death can take away.
Along this walk I told my love, along this walk
she told me hers;
Beside this gate we said good-bye, where I first
saw her tears:
These Memory's soul has loved and kept through-
out the wasted years.

XIV

The shadow falls aslant my path—'tis there where
dawn be-lights the skies,
And when the twilight curtains fall along the West
it lies:
At night it deepens and be-dims the sight of weary
eyes;
And yet, through all, I keep my god, my creed
and on the altar lay
My daily sacrifice and guard love's flame afresh
each day:
These fate, nor man, nor envious sea, can ever
take away.

